# Resolution on the European integration process of Kosovo

2010/2610(RSP) - 08/07/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 455 to 155 with 28 abstentions a resolution tabled on the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the European integration process of Kosovo. It notes the declaration of independence of Kosovo of 17 February 2008, and recalls that 22 EU Member States have recognised Kosovo as an independent country and five have not. Parliament encourages **all Member States to step up their common approach towards Kosovo** with the objective of Kosovo's accession to the EU. It welcomes the constructive attitude towards Kosovo emphasised by the Spanish Presidency in spite of its non-recognition of the country. Parliament **would welcome the recognition by all Member States of the independence of Kosovo**. It reiterates its view expressed in its resolutions of 29 March 2007 and 5 February 2009 that **rejects the possibility of partitioning Kosovo**.

Members stress the utmost importance of the EU integration processes of all countries in the region for **regional stabilisation**. They underline that the prospect of accession to the EU is a powerful incentive for the necessary reforms in Kosovo and call for practical steps to make this prospect more tangible both to the government and to citizens. The Commission is asked to include Kosovo in the screening process starting in early 2011 with a view to preparing the country for the launch of negotiations on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, to communicate to the Kosovo authorities which steps need to be taken before the Commission prepares the road map for visa liberalisation and to define the road map immediately after these steps are taken.

Parliament is concerned about the **state of relations with Serbia**. While understanding the emotional implications of the aftermath of the 1999 war and understanding that the official recognition of Kosovo is not a feasible political option at the moment for the Belgrade leadership, it nevertheless calls on Serbia to be pragmatic on the status issue. It calls on Serbia to refrain from blocking Kosovo's membership of international organisations and in particular its recent application to join the World Health Organisation. Members underline that the conflict also affects regional trade and cooperation under the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), harming the economies of the countries in the region. They call on all sides to show a pragmatic approach to allow Kosovo's regional integration. In this regard the expected advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo should not hinder all parties involved from clearly committing themselves to effective cross-border, regional and local cooperation in the best interests of the whole population in and around Kosovo. Members recall that one of the three important aims of the stabilisation and association process, which will be the framework for membership negotiations, is regional cooperation.

On **visa liberalisation,** Parliament notes the decision not to include Kosovo in the visa liberalisation demonstrates a profound contradiction in the EU's Kosovo strategy which lies in the discrepancy between an enormous aid effort in terms of resources and personnel on the one hand and keeping the borders closed to all those whose labour could contribute to development on the other hand. Some Member States apply visa facilitation measures unilaterally while eight Member States continue to charge full visa fees. Parliament calls on EU Member States and the Commission to make every effort to adopt quickly uniform provisional facilitated procedures in order to ease travel for Kosovo citizens, especially in the light of the possibilities offered under the new visa code.

Members go on to welcome the establishment of the EU House in northern Kosovo but are **concerned about the situation in the north of Kosovo**, which continues to suffer from severe shortcomings in the

rule of law, increasing pressure on and intimidation of civil society by radical groups and organised crime. They want the Council to make the rule of law mission (EULEX) functional in the entire territory of Kosovo and ask the Commission to raise the profile of its work on behalf of the Serbian community in the north, while underlining to all stakeholders on the ground that local, regional and cross-border cooperation is valuable to the population as a whole. Parliament expresses concern about the problems in the current functioning of the judiciary in the Mitrovica region and calls on Serbia and Kosovo to finalise the agreement on staffing the court in Mitrovica North with Kosovo Serbian judges and a prosecutor. It calls on EULEX to make efforts to increase its activities in the north, particularly in order to foster good inter-ethnic relations, while informing the population on the ground about EU action and the ongoing rule of law mission. It expresses its deep concern at the fatal blast that killed one person and injured ten others that took place in Mitrovica North on 2 July during the demonstrations against the opening of the civil services centre and at the attack of 5 July on an ethnic Serb member of the Kosovo Assembly. Parliament strongly condemns all acts of violence and urges EULEX to make every effort to defuse tension and prevent further violence.

Members move on to stress that 2010 is a crucial year for both the Kosovo Government and all levels of the administration in order to make **progress on key reforms such as the fight against corruption** and organised crime, decentralisation and public administration reform. They are extremely concerned about the widespread corruption which remains one of the biggest problems in Kosovo, another being organised crime. Parliament calls for urgent action to combat it by improving the legal framework for tackling corruption, adopting an anti-corruption strategy and action plan and stepping up cooperation with the police and judicial authorities of all the countries of the region. It also calls for swift adoption of a law regulating the financing of political parties, which would effectively and transparently regulate party finances, ensuring full disclosure of their financial reports.

Parliament is seriously concerned about the fact that **Kosovo continues to be one of the poorest countries in Europe**, with unemployment exceeding 40%. This situation is unsustainable and difficult living conditions have resulted in growing discontent in society. It calls for urgent action to improve the efficiency of social systems to provide a safety net for the vulnerable parts of society and to pursue active labour policies to decrease unemployment. The Commission is asked to make full use of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance to foster Kosovo's socioeconomic development, in particular for young people. Parliament appeals to the EU and Member States to accept as many Kosovo citizens as possible as seasonal workers and in sectors with labour shortages.

Lastly, Members take note of the opening of the new EU Office in Belgrade in the framework of the **EU Special Representative Kosovo mandate**, operating separately from the existing EU Delegation to Serbia. They deplore the lack of transparency with regard to the latest extension of the mandate for the EU SR to Kosovo, including a substantial increase in appropriations, and recall that the adoption of the new interinstitutional agreement on budgetary matters will have to address properly the EP's information requirements by taking into account the Lisbon Treaty.